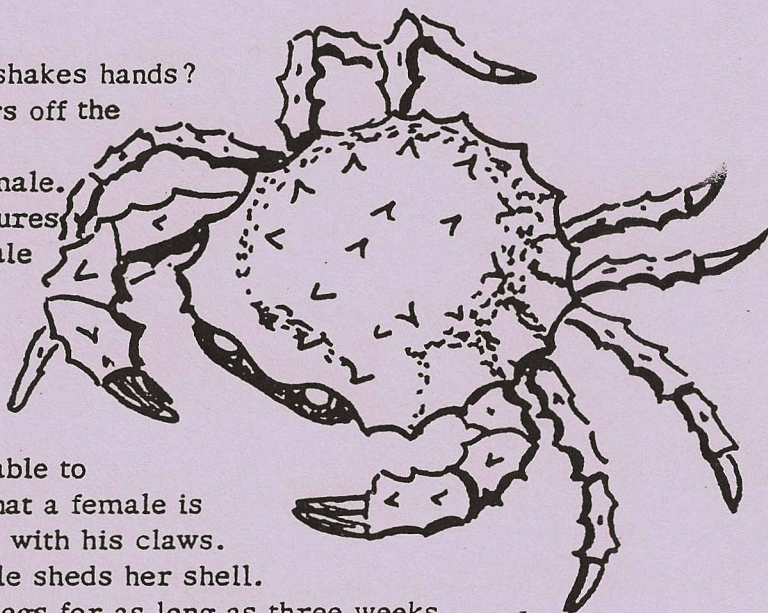


## COMPREHENSION CHALLENGES

Did you know that there is a crab that shakes hands? This crustacean that lives in the cold waters off the Alaskan shore is not just friendly. The hand-shaking behavior helps protect the female.

The male crab is one of nature's creatures that takes care of his mate. Crabs both male and female, look so strong with their armor-like shells, this may surprise you. Nevertheless, it is an interesting and real-life drama that occurs.

Each year the female molts, or loses her shell. At this time she is most vulnerable to predators. When a male is able to sense that a female is preparing to molt, he grasps her front legs with his claws. Then, the two "shake hands" until the female sheds her shell. Sometimes the male may clasp his mate's legs for as long as three weeks. The molting process often takes that long. With such a strong protector, the female is kept safe from harm.



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1. A good title for this selection is:
  - (a) Shells
  - (b) The Molting Female Crab
  - (c) Three Weeks
  - (d) Alaskan Waters
2. The male crab's shaking the female in molting is:
  - (a) necessary
  - (b) a nuisance
  - (c) unwelcome
  - (d) harmful
3. The female molts:
  - (a) daily
  - (b) weekly
  - (c) annually
  - (d) biannually
4. The molting process often takes as long as:
  - (a) 2 weeks
  - (b) 4 weeks
  - (c) 6 weeks
  - (d) 3 weeks
5. As a result of the male crab's hand shaking, the female:
  - (a) gets a new shell
  - (b) lays eggs
  - (c) molts
  - (d) loses her claws
6. Vulnerable is another word for:
  - (a) open to attack
  - (b) powerful
  - (c) safe
  - (d) strong
7. From this selection you can conclude that the crab has a:
  - (a) soft abdomen
  - (b) hard outer skeleton
  - (c) hard inner skeleton
  - (d) long legs
8. You can also conclude that this male crab has:
  - (a) one mate
  - (b) several mates
  - (c) a small family
  - (d) a large family